



DG FUELS
 LOCAL IMPACT
 PREDICTIONS



640
FULL-TIME JOBS

313
SECONDARY JOBS



\$54 MILLION
ANNUAL PAYROLL



\$140 MILLION
ANNUAL
CORN STOVER
PURCHASES



15.7% INCREASE
IN RETAIL SALES



FEEDING & FUELING AMERICA

Town Hall Meeting Answers
 Questions About DG Fuels Project

More than 300 people packed the Phelps County Ag Center on Dec. 17 to learn details about DG Fuels' plans to build a sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) plant in the county.

The \$5 billion project, which will convert corn stover into SAF, would create 640 jobs and provide \$140 million in annual premiums to area farmers.

The Phelps County Development Corporation, DG Fuels, and Nebraska BioEconomy hosted the town hall meeting. Speakers explained the project and answered questions from the audience about housing, construction timelines, and the effects on local natural resources.



Speakers at a town hall meeting answered questions about the DG Fuels project. From left, PCDC Executive Director Ron Tillery, PCDC Board President Shane Westcott, Nebraska BioEconomy leader Julie Bushell, DG Fuels CEO Mike Darcy, NPPD CEO Tom Kent, and Southern Public Power District CEO Chad Waldow.

Agricultural Benefits

PCDC Board President Shane Westcott praised local ag producers as some of the best in the world, making Phelps County the perfect location for this project.

"It has the potential to have a positive economic impact for multiple generations, Westcott said. "Our kids have opportunities to have good paying jobs to stay home for or come back to."

He emphasized the importance of protecting Phelps County's "natural resources, our people, our water, and our land" throughout the project.

He also assured local farmers that "everyone will receive an equal opportunity to participate in this project."

Julie Bushell, head of Nebraska BioEconomy and owner of GSD Partnership, said her dream is that someday when airplanes fly over the nation, the crew will proudly announce that the plane is fueled by the hard-working Nebraska farmers who grow the corn for the Sustainable Aviation Fuel that's fueling the flight.

"I'm a firm believer that it's time for agriculture to take the power back," Bushell said. "The world is demanding bio-based products, and they cannot do that without farmers and ranchers, and it's our time."

DG Fuels CEO Mike Darcy said Phelps County farmers are "some of the most efficient growers of corn

stover in the country. That's why I'm here. I need carbon feedstock. That comes from corn stover."

The facility will turn 97 percent of the carbon in the corn stover directly into SAF with no additional blending or additives needed. It will likely be shipped to Omaha and Chicago airports. He assured participants that the demand for SAF far outweighs the supply.

DG Fuels will pay farmers an estimated \$150 a dry ton for corn stover.

"Your success in agriculture means being able to turn your relatively waste feedstock into a high-value product," Darcy said.

continued on page 3

FOLLOW US / LIKE US

PhelpsCountyNE.com facebook.com/PhelpsCountyDevelopmentCorporation





Executive Director

Ron Tillery
Ron@PhelpsCountyNe.com

Director of Business Services

Sally Sadd
Sally@PhelpsCountyNe.com

Director of Administrative Services

Stacy Pafford
Stacy@PhelpsCountyNe.com

GO! NEWS Editor

Kristine Jacobson
Send news releases,
news tips and story ideas to
kjacobson@krjpr.com

PCDC Officers

Shane Westcott - President
Jared Engelbert -
Vice President
Chris McQuillan
Secretary/Treasurer

Board of Directors

Janet Boehler
Nate DeWald
Grant Ericksen
Grant Hinze
Phil Hinrichs
Tye Marquardt
Reed McClymont
Jeff Moon
Doug Stevenson

PCDC Offices

502 East Avenue, Suite 201
PO Box 522
Holdrege, NE 68949-0522
ph (308) 995-4148
fax (308) 995-4158
www.PhelpsCountyNe.com

New PCDC Board Member Owns Hall of Fame Business

Tye Marquardt, a transplant to Phelps County, has firmly established himself in the community and is committed to ensuring its prosperity for future generations of his family who now call Holdrege home.

Marquardt, owner of Nebraskaland Aviation, is the newest PCDC board member, beginning his service in October. Marquardt's company was inducted into the PCDC Business Hall of Fame in 2023.



Tye Marquardt

“Economic development is very important to me,” Marquardt said. “I am raising a family here, so it is important to me that my kids, my grandkids, and all the people who live in our community continue to enjoy the opportunities provided to us by those who came before us. I am hopeful to contribute in some meaningful ways to the continued success that the people in Phelps County and South-Central Nebraska enjoy today.”

Marquardt was born in Colorado Springs and moved to Indianola, Neb., as a child. He graduated from Republican Valley High School. His early career was in ag retail. He worked at United Agri Products in Kearney in 1999 before moving to Holdrege to work at Nebraskaland in the spring of 2007.

At that time, Nebraskaland was owned by Jim and Sue Lindstrom. It was started in the 1960s as Westerlin-Harrington Flying Service by Dennis Westerlin. After Marquardt joined the operation, he learned everything he could from Jim and Sue. He and his wife, Aimee, purchased the remaining shares of Westerlin-Harrington Flying Service in 2012.

Nebraskaland, now owned by Tye and Aimee and their children, provides aerial application services to farmers and ground liquid custom applications, dry fertilizer custom applications, and chemical and fertilizer sales to growers who do their own spraying. Nebraskaland serves a 22-county area in South-Central Nebraska and North-Central Kansas and employs nearly 40 full-time employees, several pilots, and a dozen seasonal part-time employees.

Nebraskaland has locations in seven other communities (including its partner businesses), but the headquarters remain in Phelps County, a

place Marquardt said has several advantages.

“We enjoy the community we live in, the kindness of the people, and the rare opportunities our natural resources provide,” Marquardt said. “Phelps County has become our home, and we are very happy here. Our unique mixture of fertile farmland, abundant irrigation water, extremely talented and motivated farmers, and the kind-hearted nature of the people who live in our community are the county's greatest assets.”

Marquardt began his career as an entry-level hourly employee working in ag retail. Now, as a business owner, he has a unique perspective on business recruitment.

“I remember well the days of living from paycheck to paycheck, and as a business owner it drives me to do all that I can to make sure the people I work with are prosperous,” he said. “Prosperity comes in many forms, but good pay and a friendly, healthy work environment are critical. I think this perspective is important when making decisions about the types of businesses we recruit to make sure they provide quality jobs for our workforce. As a business owner, I also understand the challenges that go along with owning a business. I am also raising a family here, and one of my granddaughters goes to school here, so this adds a family dimension.”

Marquardt said PCDC is already doing a great job of providing housing opportunities, recruiting a workforce, and creating a business environment that brings prosperity to its citizens.

He said one of the challenges will be to maintain a reasonable cost of living for the workers who make doing business in Phelps County possible. Another challenge will be to recruit businesses that complement each other and create synergistic outcomes for business owners, employees, and customers.

Besides PCDC, Marquardt also serves on the Holdrege Airport Authority and on the Five Points Bank advisory board.

Tye and Aimee's family includes twins Derrek and Taya, who are juniors at Holdrege High School; son Austin Marquardt and his wife, Paige, of Holdrege; daughter Alexis and her husband, Travis VanEperen, and their children, Paisley and Ellie, of Juniata; son Tony Marquardt and Laurie Lyons, and their daughter, Collins, of Holdrege. Tony, Austin, and Travis are all involved in the daily operations at Nebraskaland. Derrek, Taya, Paige, Lexi and Laurie all contribute when and where they are able.

DG Fuels Town Hall Meeting

continued from page 1

“That’s a win-win.”

He told attendees that he is building a \$5 billion plant and is seeking long-term relationships with area farmers.

Westcott said that DG Fuels will only need about 25 percent of the existing corn stover from farmers in an eight-county area, leaving 75 percent for other purposes. The plant could easily expand that catchment area to 75 miles or more, which increases available stover exponentially.

Environmental Impact

Nebraska BioEconomy selects partners carefully who value agriculture and that have shared values. “We prioritize givers vs. takers who focus on protecting the people, land, and water,” Bushell said.

Darcy said the DG Fuels plant will produce less atmospheric emissions than a local hospital. No ash is produced or released into the air, and the water they use for processing does not return to the aquifer.

Exemplifying his commitment to the Nebraska BioEconomy directive of protecting the aquifer, Darcy mentioned his willingness to rail water in should he need to offset the demand on the aquifer. Collaboration between DG Fuels, Nebraska BioEconomy, NRDs, DNR and the local community will generate the final plan to satisfy the project’s water requirements.

Power Supply

NPPD CEO Tom Kent said he is “excited about the project and the load growth that will come into

the agricultural communities we serve.”

NPPD will partner with Southern Public Power District to plan for the power needs and power distribution for the project. He said NPPD already has hundreds of millions of dollars invested in upcoming projects to add new power generation in the state.

“We are not going to run out of power in Nebraska,” he said. “Public power works in partnership with our customers to ensure that we grow our facilities to serve your needs.”

DG Fuels Careers

Darcy said DG Fuels wants to “be a good partner with the community.”

He is looking to create careers, not just jobs. The Phelps County plant will offer salaries ranging from \$62,000 for entry-level careers to \$220,000 for chemical engineers. Darcy stated his first priority is to hire Nebraskans and build apprenticeship programs to support young Nebraskans’ paths to build careers at DG Fuels.

He said young workers in the petroleum industry want to work in renewable energy and will be excited to work for DG Fuels.

His company has already connected with Central Community College to start discussing educational partnerships. He also has connected with Phelps Memorial Health Center to collaborate on ensuring that medical services are available and are not strained. This may result in new services in the community, such as an urgent care clinic.

The company has pledged support and investment through its Community Benefits

program that will be crafted from input gathered in the town hall meeting and through conversations with community leaders in the coming months.

Housing

Construction on the DG Fuels plant is expected to start in 2026 and be complete in late 2029 or early 2030. At the beginning, about 800 construction workers will be needed, and that number will peak at 2,300.

Darcy said he is working with local officials to facilitate housing for both temporary construction workers as well as permanent family homes. Housing will be distributed throughout the entire county.

“I cannot attract the labor force to run these facilities unless they have a place to live,” Darcy said.

Construction Timeline

While the project is proceeding forward at this time, Darcy said a final investment decision depends on several factors and could happen in late 2025 or early 2026.

PCDC Executive Director Ron Tillery said a project location has been identified, but it has not yet been announced.

“We do believe it is a really good site for this project, yet there are still several boxes to check before announcing an exact location,” Tillery said.

Speakers said that this town hall meeting would be the first of many to continue to keep the community updated on the progress and to answer any questions or concerns.

PCDC Hall of Fame Banquet Sets Attendance Milestone

It was a full house at the 2024 PCDC Business Hall of Fame banquet on Monday, Nov. 4, at the newly remodeled Holdrege Country Club.

Nearly 200 people attended, including Nebraska Department of Economic Development Director KC Belitz, Nebraska Sen. Dave Murman, NDED Central Field Representative Kelly Gewecke, and Holdrege Mayor Jim Liffri. It was the largest PCDC banquet in the organization’s history.

The theme was “Phelps County is Feeding and Fueling America.” Gov. Jim Pillen gave the keynote address focusing on Phelps County and Nebraska’s strengths – people, land, and water – and how those assets can help us strengthen the local economy and feed and fuel the world.

Cross Diamond Cattle Company of rural Bertrand and Holdrege’s South Central Diesel were inducted in PCDC’s Hall of Fame at the banquet.



Northern Meadows Homes Set for April Completion

PCDC Prepares For Expected Demand With DG Fuels Project

Construction is moving quickly on five new affordable homes in Holdrege's Northern Meadows subdivision, an essential step in addressing Holdrege's housing needs ahead of the DG Fuels sustainable aviation fuel plant project.

The first five homes on 16th Street are framed with trusses and roofs installed. Once the roofing is complete, siding will be added, followed by interior construction.

Dave Hegarty, CFO of R. Perry Construction, said the goal is to complete the first five homes to be ready for occupancy by April 2025. Once two or three homes are sold, construction will begin on the next two or three homes.

"We plan to work on the homes as the current homes sell, so we will do the next phase as fast as the current phase sells," Hegarty said.

Community Capital Partners, LLC, is the developer of the project. R. Perry Construction Inc. of Sioux City, Iowa, is the builder.

Each home is designed for modern family living, offering 1,280 square feet of space, three bedrooms, two bathrooms, a two-car garage, and an unfinished basement. While the homes share a general design, they will feature unique roof lines, siding patterns, and garage placements to add variety to the neighborhood.

The new homes are priced at \$289,950. While none of the homes have sold yet, interested buyers can contact Realtor Katie Graham at 308-737-7592 for more information.



Workers found the early December warm temperatures conducive to house building in the new Northern Meadows subdivision in Holdrege.

The subdivision is conveniently located near Holdrege's new baseball complex between 14th and 18th Avenues, the Holdrege Country Club golf course, the Don Sjogren Community YMCA, Hy-Vee, and Phelps Memorial Health Center.

Once finished, the new subdivision will include 30 single-family homes.

As DG Fuels prepares to build its \$5 billion sustainable aviation fuel plant in Phelps County, the demand for housing in Holdrege is expected to increase significantly.

"We're already discussing the housing needs that will come with DG Fuels," PCDC Executive Director Ron Tillery said. "Projects like Northern

Meadows are crucial for ensuring our community is ready to support new workers and their families."

Tillery said PCDC intends to apply for another rural workforce housing grant and is discussing possible locations for more new housing options, including both owner-occupied and rental units.

The Northern Meadows project was made possible through a rural workforce housing grant, which was awarded to PCDC in May of 2023.

In partnership with the City of Holdrege, \$400,000 in grant funds and \$200,000 in PCDC matching funds were directed to build Northern Meadows. Grant funds helped create streets, sewer, water, and lighting.

Vacant Property Ordinance Making an Impact

If you've noticed some cleaned-up properties around Holdrege, it might be due to the city's recently new vacant property ordinance.

The ordinance, passed in February 2023, requires owners of residential or commercial properties that remain vacant for more than six months to register those properties with the city. Exemptions are granted for properties under active construction or those actively listed for sale. For properties left idle, owners must pay a registration fee starting at \$250, which doubles every six months of continued vacancy.

"It was put in place to motivate property owners to do something with properties that had been

A \$250 fine is assessed for vacant properties. The fines double every six months.

sitting empty for years," City Administrator Chris Rector explained.

City staff began by identifying vacant properties, which totaled about 30, and sending out notification letters to property owners.

The city offered to work with property owners on landfill fees to help clean up the properties. A few properties have been torn down. A few others are now in foreclosure and may soon be demolished.

With fines continuing to double every six months with a maximum fine of \$10,000 per year, the

ordinance is motivation for property owners of vacant homes and businesses to take action.

These efforts have not only improved the city's appearance but also opened up opportunities for redevelopment and community use.

The ordinance is part of a growing trend across Nebraska as the Legislature passed a law allowing cities to establish vacant property registries.

"This is about encouraging people to take responsibility for their properties," Rector said.

While the process takes time, the early outcomes are promising. The ultimate goal is to repurpose these vacant spaces, contributing to Holdrege's economic growth and quality of life.

New Nonprofit Tackles Childcare Shortages

Partnership Supports Parents, Children & Area Employers

The Holdrege Area Early Childhood Partnership Inc., a newly formed nonprofit, is taking action to solve local childcare shortages to strengthen the workforce and economy.

“Childcare is becoming a major issue in keeping people in the workforce,” PCDC Board Member Grant Ericksen said. “Sustainable childcare can bridge the gap to keep people in the workforce and drive the local economy.”

Ericksen represents PCDC on the organization’s newly formed board of directors.

Holdrege Memorial Homes CEO Kevin Moriarty and Holdrege Area Chamber of Commerce CEO Lori Larson were instrumental in launching the project along with key leaders at major local employers including Mark Harrel, CEO of Phelps Memorial Health Center; Jason Sidel, plant director of BD, now embecta; and representatives from Allmand, Inc.

In 2022, the initial group received a \$15,000 grant from the statewide Communities for Kids (C4K) program. Communities for Kids is a program started in 2017 by the Nebraska Children and Families Foundation to help communities, primarily in rural areas, grow and prosper by strengthening and sustaining a quality early childhood care and education infrastructure. More than 67 Nebraska communities are now participating in the program.

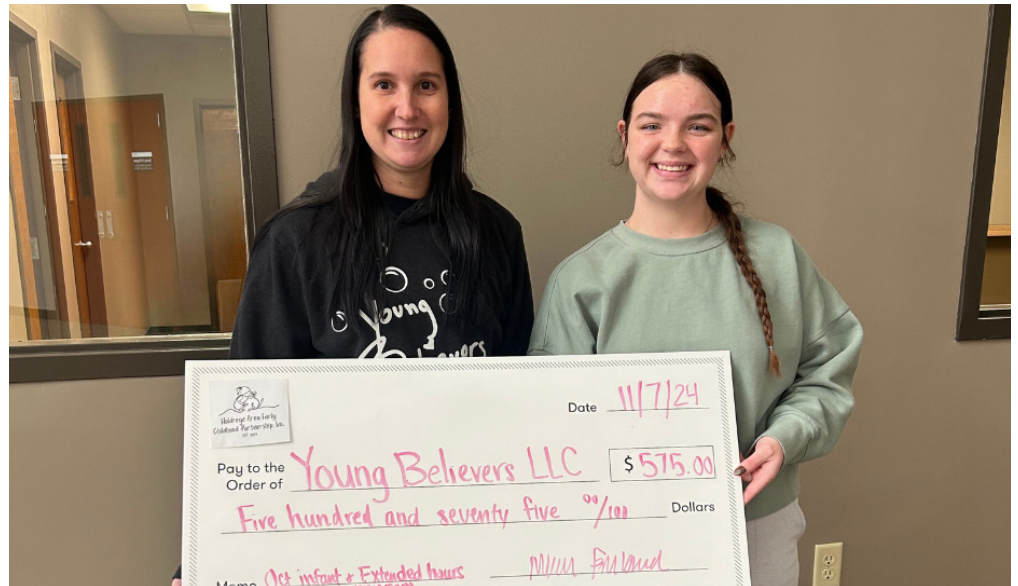
In addition to funding from C4K, Holdrege Memorial Homes and Phelps Memorial Health Center helped fund the project locally.

McKenna Fahrenbruch, owner of Graceful Exposure Social Media Agency, was hired in 2024 to manage the project. She now serves as the executive director. The partnership’s mission is to ensure that Holdrege families have access to safe, quality childcare to foster a thriving community where both children and businesses can flourish.

The partnership has already implemented several impactful programs:

- **Infant Incentive Program:** Monthly incentives for providers who open spots for infants, addressing a critical shortage.

- **Extended Hours Program:** Provides incentives for childcare providers to offer extended hours, catering to local businesses that require extended shift care for parents.



Amber Push, director of Young Believers, LLC, and Isabelle Vap receive their first incentive check for being involved in the Infant Incentive and Extended Hours programs. (Courtesy photo)

- **Step Up to Quality:** Encourages local providers to register for the Step Up to Quality program to receive coaching and professional development on early childhood development. Providers who complete the program and meet standards can receive increased childcare subsidies.

- **Christmas Wish Lists:** Collects donations for new toys and games to benefit local childcare centers.

- **Education:** Promotes new childcare tax credits for providers, parents, and businesses supporting childcare facilities.

Larson said the original group discovered a gap in providing care for children of parents working overnight or 12-hour shifts. If a childcare facility opens at 7 a.m., but the parent has to be at work at 7 a.m., there is a lack of care for that short time.

“The result is people were leaving positions, and it became difficult to find the workforce to staff those 24-hour industries like the hospital, nursing homes and manufacturing,” Larson said.

The Extended Hours incentive is one way the group is helping solve that problem.

“We also want to ensure our children are being cared for with the highest quality of services,” Larson said. “We used the state’s Step Up to Quality as a resource to scale up what our community can offer.”

Fahrenbruch said the long-term goal of the organization is to enhance sustainability for local businesses and childcare programs.

GET INVOLVED

Businesses and providers can participate by donating or joining programs like Step Up to Quality. Companies that commit to multi-year donations or contribute \$5,001 or more will be placed on a Provider Priority List, giving their employees childcare preference — a key benefit for recruitment and retention.

Scan the QR code to contact Fahrenbruch, make a donation, sign up for a program or learn about the new childcare tax credit for employers and donors.



“We aim to provide our incentive programs and resources over the long term to support the growth of Holdrege,” she said. “By doing so, we hope to ensure that there are enough open childcare spots available for businesses, allowing them to hire new employees while offering quality childcare options for their children.”

Major partners are Communities for Kids (C4K), embecta, Phelps Memorial Health Center, and Holdrege Memorial Homes. PCDC has joined this list of funding partners for 2025.

Burrows Named Director of Holdrege Public Library

The Holdrege Area Public Library has a new leader with a familiar face.

Sierra Burrows began working at the library in high school nearly 20 years ago. She then volunteered as President of the Friends of the Library and was most recently working as the

library's circulation manager before being promoted to library director in September.

"This position allows me to bring my experience and vision to ensure our library continues to grow as a vital resource for our community," Burrows said.



Sierra Burrows

Burrows plans to expand the library's programs, services, and

partnerships. Among the exciting upcoming projects is the Teen Science Café, the first of its kind in a Nebraska public library. This free STEM initiative provides teens with hands-on opportunities to connect with local experts and leaders in science and technology.

The library's online presence is another area she hopes to enhance, with plans to collaborate with local businesses and organizations to offer unique educational and cultural experiences. Adding to this momentum, the Board of Trustees announced plans in July for a new library building initiative. While still in its early stages, this project reflects the library's growing attendance and the community's evolving needs.

"A new library building will provide the space,

resources, and facilities our city and county need to continue thriving," Burrows said.

Burrows plans to graduate in 2025 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Education with a Library Science major and Public Administration minor from the University of Nebraska Omaha.

When she's not working, Burrows enjoys reading, graphic design, and community event planning. She also serves on the Iron Horse Creative District board of directors. She and her husband, Seth, enjoy spending time at the Robb Jeffery Distinguished Range.

Pelster Promoted to YMCA Branch Leadership Role

Joel Pelster is the new Executive Branch Director at the Don Sjogren Community YMCA. Pelster, who previously served as the YMCA Sports Program Director for the past seven years, began his new role in October.



Joel Pelster

Pelster is a self-described sports fanatic and loves watching and playing most any kind of sport from golf and basketball to softball and pickleball. He has increased youth and adult sports participation numbers at the YMCA and launched a popular

pickleball program with four annual tournaments.

Pelster is an Ogallala native and earned a bachelor of Sports & Business Administration degree from the University of Nebraska at Kearney. Before starting his Y career, he worked

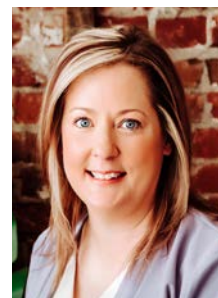
at his family's lumber business.

The Don Sjogren Community YMCA is one of three branches that is part of the YMCA of the Prairie Association. YMCA of the Prairie CEO Riley Gruntorad said Pelster has done an exceptional job of leading the sports department, and he is confident that Pelster will bring the same level of excellence to his new role.

"His strong community connections and the relationships he has built will serve us well as we continue to grow and thrive," Gruntorad said.

Longtime PCCF Staff Member Appointed as New Director

Lacy Chapman is the new Executive Director of the Phelps County Community Foundation.



Lacy Chapman

Chapman first joined PCCF in 2008 as the administrative assistant. She played a key role in developing PCCF's successful give2GROW day and the PCCF scholarship program.

"In my new position, I have the chance to explore innovative methods to build partnerships that

will enable the foundation to continue growing in impactful ways," Chapman said.

Chapman is originally from Oxford and graduated from Southern Valley. She has an associate's degree in commercial art, and she enjoys photography and art in her spare time.

She and her husband, Cory, live in Axtell. Their family includes daughter Camdyn; son, Caden; and granddaughter, Gracy.

CONGRATULATIONS COAL & FEED!

Renovated Coffee Shop Opens, Adds Ice Cream

Coal & Feed Coffee & Vittle in downtown Holdrege opened for business on Monday, December 9.

Toni Wells and Peggy Billeter purchased the business, formerly 4th Ave. Coffee, in July. After extensive remodeling, the rebranded coffee shop/restaurant reopened to happy customers.

Coal & Feed features an all-new menu featuring sweet treats created by their full-time baker Adeline Larson; hard-packed ice cream in a dozen flavors; soups, salads and sandwiches; and smoothies, teas, coffees and other specialty drinks.

PCDC helped the Coal & Feed with several GO! DREAM grants, including a building integrity grant and a first impression signage grant.



PCDC Grants Aid Turner Body Shop Expansion

Business growth at Turner Body Shop in downtown Holdrege has caused cramped spaces for its staff. Now, thanks to grants from PCDC, the local body shop is expanding.



Ashley Turner

PCDC awarded Turner a Business and Franchise grant to help construct a new 60 x 60 building on the lot behind the business at 314 East Ave. The grant package will also help with landfill and permitting fees and marketing.

"The funds that PCDC is providing will help tremendously as we are a small family business, and the cost of building is not cheap," owner Ashley Turner said.

Turner is a full-service collision shop, providing tire repair and replacement, glass replacement, replacement parts, restoration, digital frame measuring, alignments and full suspension, paint, 24-hour towing, Paintless Dent Repair, free rental car assistance, and virtual estimating. The business also offers free vehicle pickup and

delivery, along with mobile estimating, to anyone in the Holdrege area.

"The growth in our customer base has put us in high demand for expanding production room," Ashley said. "The techs are elbow to elbow in our current building."

While they originally planned to expand onto the front lot, which would have taken away parking stalls, they were recently able to purchase the lot behind the business. That's where the new steel building is being constructed.

"This building will be used for paint production, equipped with an oversized booth for larger vehicles, a wash bay, prep station, and class area for continued tech training," Ashley said.

Melroy Construction started building the new space in October.

"Groothuis and Sons Plumbing (Funk), All City Garage Door (Kearney), M&J signs (Elm Creek), Durable Services (Holdrege), Weisheit Construction Co. (Stamford), K & D Electric (Holdrege), and of course the amazing city officials have all made this project possible for us," Ashley said.

Ashley said Turner Body Shop purchased the Holdrege business from D & T Body Shop (Bruce and Carla Thomsen) in 2016. Her late husband, Tony, and

his mom, Barb Turner, had been looking for a way to expand their Kearney business when the Holdrege opportunity became available. Tony's grandfather started the business in Kearney in 1969. Ashley started working at the Holdrege shop in 2016.

Unfortunately, Tony passed away in November 2019 in a car wreck leaving the Holdrege shop.

"We were then faced with a decision," Ashley said. "Close the business, which meant leaving all Tony's hard work, or plant our feet, take what we knew, and continue the family legacy. We chose to continue in our fearless leader's name. Our staff rallied with us on our decision, supporting us and stepping up to the plate to help where we lacked. We had several industry members come to our aide also, offering knowledge, classes, conferences, and mentorship."

The business is now owned by Ashley, Barb Turner, and Robert Turner. It employs a staff of 11, including Ashley.

"We are always looking to add to our body shop family and encourage entry-level youth to come see if they are interested in joining our industry," Ashley said. "We provide a scholarship every year to a select individual who wants to pursue auto body as their career."

Holdrege Mom Starts Dream Cream Donuts

A Holdrege mother of eight has perfected her fried donut recipe, and local residents are savoring her new homemade creations.

Dream Cream Donuts is the name of Maegan Wagner's new business that started on a whim after a recent trip to Pennsylvania.

"I got a chance to taste the incredible donuts made by the local Amish," Maegan said. "I was so delighted with them that I was determined to learn how to make them myself. As a mother of eight children, I had plenty of willing taste testers!"

After much experimenting and plenty of failures, she felt she had created "the perfect donut."

The next step was to see if anyone else besides her family agreed. She made some batches for her husband, Dyrand, to take to work. After receiving critiques, both positive and negative, she adjusted the recipes.

She is grateful for her husband's support and for encouraging her to "take the leap" to post on the Holdrege Eats Facebook page to see if anyone would be interested in purchasing donuts.

"I was pleasantly surprised by the positive response!" she said.



Maegan Wagner, center, and her children from left Pria, Kimber, Aravis, and Conrad are giving Holdrege residents a new breakfast option with Dream Cream Donuts. (Courtesy photo)

She thanks Mandy Manley and the team at Tractor Supply for allowing her to set up a table there that first week.

"It was a wonderful opportunity to meet more people in person and introduce our business to the community," Maegan said.

She currently makes raised donuts and cake

donut holes. Bavarian Creme, Raspberry Jelly and glazed are the most popular raised donuts, and Vanilla and Pumpkin Spiced are the most popular cake donuts. She plans to add flavors over the next few months.

Her four oldest children, Conrad, Aravis, Kimber, and Pria, help with the business.

"Initially, I was doing everything myself, but they begged to be involved," Maegan said. "After some training, they now assist me in cutting donuts, frying, glazing, and packaging. They all receive a portion of the profits every week."

Currently, Dream Cream Donuts is a home-based business, but Maegan hopes to someday offer her donuts from a food truck or permanent shop.

To taste Maegan's donuts, follow Dream Cream Donuts or Holdrege Eats on Facebook for the next pop-up donut shop time and location.

Dream Cream Donuts is planning to set up "fairly often" at Lost Way Brewery in 2025.

"Many thanks to Jessica Kraus (co-owner of Lost Way Brewery) for inviting us," Maegan said. "We are so grateful to the people of Holdrege for supporting our business!"



PO Box 522
Holdrege, NE 68949-0522

Or Current Resident

Your **SOURCE** for
local business
opportunities
and economic
development news
in Phelps County!

PHELPS COUNTY BUSINESS JOURNAL



TAKE A LOOK
INSIDE

- 1** DG FUELS UPDATE
- 2** BOARD FEATURE
- 3** HOF BANQUET
- 4** HOUSING
- 5** CHILDCARE
- 6** BUSINESS NEWS
- 7** BUSINESS NEWS



ELEVATING THE ARTS

LEFT: The new Midtown Sculpture Garden in downtown Holdrege officially opened in November.

ABOVE: The Iron Horse Arts District commissioned “The Mailbox” mural in October. Muralist Dan Toro of Wyoming painted the mural using more than 200 cans of spray paint.